

[Floor Situation](#) | [Summary](#) | [Background](#) | [Cost](#) | [Staff Contact](#)

[H.R. 1615, DHS FOIA Efficiency Act of 2015, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, June 23, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1615](#), *the DHS FOIA Efficiency Act of 2015, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1615 was introduced on March 25, 2015, by Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA) and was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, which ordered the bill reported, as amended, by voice vote, on May 20, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1615 requires the Chief Freedom of Information Officer (FOIA) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), not later than 90 days after enactment, to finalize and issue an updated regulation implementing certain Freedom of Information Act requirements. The bill also requires the Chief FOIA Officer at DHS to disseminate the Department's plan to automate FOIA processing to the heads of relevant components and seek written feedback from each component head regarding the extent to which that component intends to adopt the processing automation plan.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security “receives and processes the most Freedom of Information Act requests out of any federal department.”¹ The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently [reported](#) that DHS “also faces the largest backlog of unprocessed FOIA requests of any federal agency—roughly half of the total number for all federal agencies.”² H.R. 1615 requires a more streamlined approach to the processing of FOIA requests to reduce the backlog and improve transparency.

According to the bill sponsor, “the bill will implement desperately needed reforms to improve the process, eliminate duplication and significantly reduce the backlog while increasing transparency and accountability to the public.”³

¹ [House Report 114-148](#) at 3.

² *Id.*

³ See Press Release—“[Homeland Security Freshmen Announce Initiative to Curb Waste, Fraud, Abuse & Increase Transparency at DHS](#),” March 30, 2015.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 1615 would not significantly affect DHS spending. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.